

Seismic Grants for Apartments and Multi-Family Homes will Save Lives And Help Families Recover Faster

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Oakland, Calif. – Two seismic retrofitting grants will help reduce damage to as many as 50 Oakland apartment buildings and as many as 375 single and multi-family homes. The combined \$10.5 million grants include \$7.9 million from FEMA and \$2.6 million from non-federal sources.

Retrofitting structures to prevent collapse during a large magnitude Hayward fault earthquake would reduce serious injury and fatalities. Mitigating against earthquake damage benefits families, businesses, and local governments. Families would be less likely to suffer injury or become homeless, landlords would continue to receive rent income, and the city would benefit from a steady stream of post-disaster income from taxes and economic recovery.

Soft-story apartment buildings are generally identified as having first floor garages with living areas on the levels above the garage. Engineered hardening of soft-story apartments can cost from \$60,000 to \$150,000. However, this would preserve existing housing stock and be many times less expensive than demolishing, sheltering, and rebuilding after an earthquake. Engineered retrofits are generally designed for the interior first level and are approved by the city.

The potential for structural damage and human injury in single and multi-family homes following a major earthquake is great. Unmitigated residential homes are more susceptible to shifting foundations and structural collapse. Even non-structural safety measures such as bracing chimneys and strapping water heaters are effective ways to protect from falling bricks and concrete and prevent uncontrolled gas leaks. Homes and apartments at greatest risk of structural damage have been identified by the city.

Making families significantly safer through seismic retrofits is urgently needed as scientists forecast a high probability of a major quake in the San Francisco Bay



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Area - specifically a major earthquake on the Hayward fault is predicted to occur in the next 30 years. Bay area counties have received more than \$40 million in FEMA grants for residential earthquake retrofitting projects since the mid-1990s.

FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Grant Program helps States, territories, federally-recognized tribes, local communities and certain private non-profit organizations become more resilient to potential infrastructure damage and reduce future disaster costs.

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